

Writing strategies, ideas and activities to
enrich and improve students' writing
skills.

Improving and Enriching the Writing

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*After an orange cloud---formed as a result of a
dust storm over the Sahara and caught up by air
currents---reached the Philippines and settled
there with rain, I understood that we are all
sailing in the same boat. Vladimir Kovalyonok
Russian Cosmonaut*

Enriching Writing

All too often students approach writing with trepidation and a reluctance to put pen to paper. We all have the potential to be creative and storytelling is an innate skill, yet too many individuals claim to be unable to write effectively. We need to ensure that we spend time immersing our students in the writing process. All students can write well when they are inspired and feel supported to take risks.

To improve the quality of student writing:

- Explicitly and systematically teach the structure and language demands of the writing task
- Focus on form, audience and purpose
- Spotlight at the word and sentence level
- Explicitly teach the thinking processes involved in writing
- Immerse students in quality examples of the required style of writing
- Model and jointly construct texts
- Use guided and independent practice
- Employ peer and self-assessment and critical reflection
- Write with your students!

Craft to artistry

'Nouns are the bones that give a sentence body. But verbs are the muscles that make it go'
Mervin Block.

Students must be immersed in the art of writing. This should happen at least three times a week. Students do not need to write complete responses each time. What is more important is that they learn to focus on the power of words: the sound, feel and look of each word. Then they move to appreciating how form and structure can be manipulated to frame their ideas.

Approaches

- **Spotlighting:**
 - Word and sentence level
 - Lexical density
- **Structure:**
 - Purpose and audience
 - Form
 - Syntax and paragraphing
 - Framing devices
- **Senses:**
 - Sound: Auditory imagery - Euphony, discordance...the vowels and consonants
 - Sight: Visceral imagery - Figurative devices and word choice
 - Feeling: Nuances and emotive language
 - Smell and taste: Olfactory and gustatory imagery - Figurative devices and word choice

- Develop a strong, distinctive voice. To achieve this it is best to write about what they have experienced so that their writing comes from the heart.
- Show don't tell. Remind them to avoid too much information and focus on appealing to the senses through effective descriptions. Remind them that our most powerful tool is our imagination! A text that suggests rather than tells all has a powerful impact on the reader.
- Start in the middle of the place or action.
- Use contrast! E.g. A beautiful setting with a storm brewing.
- Choose and control their use of a range of language features to engage and influence an audience. This means using techniques such as:
 - a. A variety of sentence beginnings and sentence lengths. They could use short, simple sentences and fractured sentences to create tension or long, complex sentences to slow the action down.
 - b. Not being afraid to use a single sentence paragraph to make a dramatic statement.
 - c. Figurative devices such as: similes, metaphors, personification, alliteration, assonance, sibilants and onomatopoeia.
 - d. Striking verbs – the muscles of writing! Avoiding adjectives!
 - e. Contrast
 - f. Imagery: Paint a picture for their reader – add colour, sound and smells. Tim Winton does this well: *"From the water's edge you couldn't even see our street. I found eggs in the reeds, skinks in the fallen log, a bluetongue lizard jawing up at me with its hard scales shining amidst the sighing wild oats. I sat in the hot shade of a melaleuca in a daze."*
 - g. Synaesthesia: Incorporating a number of senses together, such as colour and sound.
 - h. They need to listen to the sound and rhythm of the language.
 - i. Aim for lexical density! Playing with puns and gerunds develops this skill.

Grammar and Vocabulary

- **Grammar Skills:** <http://www.bbc.co.uk/skillswise/words/grammar/> - younger pupils
- **Grammar Monster:** <http://www.grammar-monster.com/index.html> - younger pupils
- **Grammar Ninja:** <http://www.kwarp.com/portfolio/grammarninja.html> - younger pupils
- **Cyber Grammar:** <http://www.cybergrammar.co.uk/index.php> - senior pupils and teachers
- **Visuword:** <http://www.visuwords.com/> - a beautiful online thesaurus to find more effective synonyms.

Sentence imitation

Match the shape and word order of original sentences. Select sentences from well written stories and novels and get the students to imitate the structure.

Skeleton stories

Provide the outline of a story and ask the students to add specific ingredients, such as:

- Simile

- Alliteration to one sentence
- Improve three of the verbs
- Two adjectives to two sentences
- A triad of absolute phrases in one sentence

Image palette

Provide a list of prepositional phrases and subordinate clauses and ask the students to select at least six to create an original description. E.g.

| Prepositional Phrases | Subordinate Clauses |
|-----------------------------|---|
| <i>during the night</i> | <i>because the waves were frightening</i> |
| <i>on an empty beach</i> | <i>as he walked towards the shoreline</i> |
| <i>behind the sandhills</i> | <i>when the sun set</i> |
| <i>like a lost gull</i> | <i>although he had been warned</i> |
| <i>out of breath</i> | <i>Unless he could reach the shore</i> |

Masterchef Narratives

The teacher provides the ingredients and the students have 15 minutes to ‘cook’ the special narrative.

Recipe

A teddy bear
 A red ribbon
 A faded photograph
 Two adjectives only
 Present tense
 First person
 A simile
 Alliteration
 Onomatopoeia
 A fractured sentence
 Ellipsis
 150 words maximum

Phrase writing activities

Pupils to describe family, self or friends using prepositional and appositive phrases.

| Phrases | Friend or Family Member |
|------------------------------|---|
| Prepositional phrase example | My grandson imagines that he is Buzz Lightyear <i>with magical powers</i> . |
| Prepositional phrase | |
| Prepositional phrase | |
| Prepositional phrase | |
| Appositive phrase example | My grandson, <i>an active four year old with blonde curls</i> , makes me smile. |

| | |
|-------------------|--|
| Appositive phrase | |
| Appositive phrase | |
| Appositive phrase | |
| Appositive phrase | |

Flash Fiction

50 words narratives based on a range of topic. To make this more challenging, take away the letter 'e'.

Creativity

Imaginative texts

'Don't tell me the moon is shining; show me the glint of light on broken glass' Anton Chekhov.

Composing an imaginative text is very challenging for most students. We need to ensure that we spend time immersing our students in the writing process. Students need practice and the explicit teaching of writing skills to meet this challenge with confidence and precision.

The following strategies can be used to focus students on the art of writing:

1. A sentence of the day that is based on different stimuli or has a different purpose. This can be posted to a class blog and judged each week by the students.
2. Compose a 12-word story, a haiku or a 50-word recollection of a memory. When students compress and refine language they begin to appreciate the beauty and power of words. Take away the vowel 'a' or 'e' to make the writing more challenging.
3. Get them to find images and music on the net that reflect the ideas of the story. They could record their voice reading the story or poem and use *Audacity* or *Garage Band* to mix the voice with the sound. They could publish the story or poem in powerpoint or as a short film and choose the transitions that further the meaning of the writing.
4. Focus on the power of verbs. The muscles of writing can be used as a motif or to add layers of meaning. Students could create a Worldle of verbs or create a Pecha Kucha - <http://www.speakingaboutpresenting.com/content/fast-ignite-presentation/>; <http://www.pechakucha.org/> - of images and verbs to capture a moment or evoke feelings.
5. Get them to read their writing aloud or record their writing and listen to the sound of the words so that they hear the clunks and the moments of euphony.
6. To add tension and contrast to their writing, they need to focus on plosive and fricative consonants, and long and short vowel sounds.
7. Encourage them to be observers of people and the world. Students' imaginative writing can be very superficial because they never include close observations or relevant details. Using images, paintings and photographs is one way to grow this skill.
8. Visiting YouTube and viewing short award-winning animations can raise awareness of how a simple idea is often all that is needed.
9. Invite them to imagine that they are using a camera. They could open their response with an extreme close-up and then draw back to a medium shot, and so on.

10. Focus on the art of the opening and closing sentences. Students are asked to just write the first and last sentence or first and last paragraph of an imaginative response. Visit <http://www.stylist.co.uk/life/the-best-100-opening-lines-from-books> for great opening lines!
11. Get your students to write backwards – start with the conclusion. They could use *Prezi* to do this as it encourages connecting ideas.
12. Get your students to experiment with different forms and structures. They could try flashback or an elliptical structure.
13. Found stories or poems that are actually words, phrases and lines that are ‘stolen’ from texts on the net. Students select or are given a theme or an idea and then they create the ‘original’ found story or poem.

A range of approaches

- **Flashback:** Start at the end and show what has led to this moment. Get the students to begin a narrative with the conclusion and write backwards.
- **Multiple Perspectives:** A story told through two or more characters. Get the students to write in pairs writing as the same character but with an altered perspective, such as a hero transformed into a villain.
- **Multiple Narratives:** Different stories connected by a theme or a motif, such as: survival. The students could work in groups of three. Each pupil could write in a different time period but their stories are connected by the theme of survival.
- **Pastiche:** Include a range of text forms such as: a narrative, newspaper clippings, a text message or MySpace posting. Scavenger Hunt on the net: Students have 10 minutes to find on the internet unrelated items such as: a headline, an image, a blog posting and an advertisement.
- **Circular Structure:** A story starts at a specific moment in a story; flashes back to explain the lead-up to this moment, and then finally returns to the original specific moment. Students are given a scene such as: Watching a game show on television or swimming at the beach. They have to begin and end in this same place.
- **Found Poetry:** The students have 20 minutes to ‘borrow’ single lines or phrases from poetry, short stories, newspaper headlines, opening lines of a novel, etc., and create an ‘original’ poem based on a theme.

Using technology to enrich writing

Technology has the potential to contribute substantially to the improvement of learning outcomes if it is embedded effectively in a supportive, rich and engaging learning environment where the teacher activates the learning using a plethora of teaching and assessment strategies and resource, and is moving towards personalising the learning. The following questions should always be asked:

- What do the students need to learn?
- Why does it matter?
- What do they already know?

- What do I want the students to do or produce to demonstrate their learning and understanding?
- How will they get there?
- How can technology be a powerful tool?
- How well do I expect them to do it?

Although the research on the value of technology to improve learning outcomes is sparse, based on experience and common sense, it has the power to enrich writing for the following reasons that are connected inextricably to the writing process:

- **Confidence:** Students need to feel supported and confident if they are to write well. Inspiration: The web is an endless source of rich texts, photographs and images, ideas and music.
- **Planning:** Students can use technology to create graphic organisers to shape and plan the ideas.
- **Craft to artistry:** Technology enables them to find more sophisticated words, check their spelling, and listen to their writing to discover the clunks and errors.
- **Creativity:** Technology provides students with a plethora of engaging and exciting ways to publish and present their writing.
- **Refinement, collaboration and reflection:** Students can use technology to use self and peer editing and evaluation to refine their writing – assessment *as* learning.

Rich texts to stimulate and inspire writing

If our students are to be inspired to write effectively they need to experience a plethora of quality texts that feature evocative settings, authentic characters, different approaches to form and structure, rich use of language and meaningful ideas. This must start in the junior years. We need to remember to encourage our students to delight in the aesthetic use of language.

The poets teach our students about fusing the language into compact and powerful texts that appeal to the senses, embrace lexical density and use form and structure to convey ideas that resonate. The playwrights demonstrate how to play with dialogue to reach and audience and our authors teach the art of characterisation. Photographers and painters provide fertile images that can trigger memories and stimulate ideas. The director teaches students to use verbal cinema to capture the intricate details, provide the back story and a mise-en-scene for a character and experiment with form, structure and points of view. The orator reminds students about the power of words, and the musician allows our imagination to soar.

Immerse students in a plethora of extracts from texts that use language, form and structure skilfully. You can access a range of texts and resources at the following websites:

Rich texts

- **Poem Hunter:** <http://www.poemhunter.com/> - thousands of quality poems from all periods.
- **Australian Films:** <http://aso.gov.au/education/> - Clips from Australian films, documentaries and advertisements, and teaching resources.
- **Poetry Library:** <http://www.poetrylibrary.edu.au/poets-name> - Australian poetry library.

- **Poetry in Translation:** <http://poetryintranslation.com/> - Poetry from countries across the world.
- **Asiacha:** <http://www.asiancha.com/> - Asian poetry, short stories, creative non-fiction and essays.
- **Poetry Kanto:** <http://poetrykanto.com/> - A range of Japanese poetry.
- **Muse India:** <http://www.museindia.com/regular.asp?id=40> – A range of Indian poetry.
- **Inanimate Alice:** <http://www.inanimatealice.com/> - tells the story of Alice, a young girl growing up in the first half of the 21st century in China and Russia, and her imaginary digital friend, Brad. Fabulous inspiration for a multimedia narrative. Students could download or create postcards and use each slide in Power Point to write about their adventure.
- **Magic Keys:** <http://www.magickeys.com/books/>: A plethora of multimedia stories for all ages.
- **The Shed:** <http://www.literacyshed.com/the-other-cultures-shed.html> - brilliant site with a rich range of film clips, images and ideas to inspire writing for students of all ages.
- **National Geographic:** http://travel.nationalgeographic.com.au/travel/your-faces-of-the-world-photos/#/mursi-man-ethiopia_39901_600x450.jpg – a range of fascinating images of people from the net:
- **Tropfest film clips:** *Be My Brother* - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8d-7IFN4DKA>, *The Unspoken* - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ttA2Nk-bFog>, and *Lullaby* - http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NAIvJ_hsW4I
- **Backhand Stories:** <http://www.backhandstories.com/non-fiction/> - a range of short stories, creative non-fiction and essays.
- **Newspapers:** <http://www.newspapers.com/> - 1200 newspapers from across America 1700-200s.
- **Songs to inspire writing:** <http://tylerlehmann.wordpress.com/2013/01/16/the-writers-playlist-15-songs-to-inspire-better-creative-writing/>

Creating texts

- **Celestia:** <http://www.shatters.net/celestia/>: pupils explore the universe in three dimensions - travel throughout the solar system to any of over 100,000 stars to be inspired to create science fiction stories or use the stills and clips to create their own short film or digital story.
- **The Hero's Journey:** <http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/interactives/herosjourney/> - planning for a hero's journey narrative and the elements of the hero's journey.
- **My Hero:** <http://myhero.com/go/home.asp> - students can read about people's heroes and add their own to this site.
- **Create an Online Story:** <http://storybird.com/create/>
- **Build your wild self:** <http://www.buildyourwildself.com/> - create a half-human half animal character and download them so that they can become the main character in a narrative or blog story.
- **Voki:** <http://www.voki.com/> - create an avatar for a blog story or students can play with the crafting of a character. The students can add setting, clothing and even record their character's voice.
- **Animoto:** <http://animoto.com/> - an online short film making tool.
- **GoAnimate:** <http://goanimate.com/>

- <http://www.makebeliefscomix.com/>
- **Pixton Comics:** <http://www.pixton.com/uk/home>
- <http://www.makebeliefscomix.com/>
- **Toondoo:** <http://www.toondoo.com/Home.toon>
- **Superhero:** http://superherosquad.marvel.com/create_your_own_comic

Planning

Once students have been exposed to a range of texts to stimulate ideas for writing, allowing them to use technology to plan their writing will enable them to refine their ideas, find connections, 'play' with tangential pathways and brainstorm words.

They could use the following sites for planning:

- **Spicynodes:** <http://www.spicynodes.org/> - graphic organizer.
- **Wordle:** <http://www.wordle.net/> - a word cloud to brainstorm ideas and words.
- **Taxedo:** <http://www.tagxedo.com/> - refine ideas using an image and words.
- **Graphic organizers** - <http://www.eduplace.com/graphicorganizer/> - PDF and word documents with a wide range of planning tools.
- **Graphic organizers** - http://www.educationoasis.com/curriculum/graphic_organizers.htm – links to PDFs.
- **Freemind:** <http://freemind.sourceforge.net/wiki/index.php/Download> - mind mapping.

Setting

*'Sometimes the spirit of a place is so strong you may think you see its face and glimpse it gambolling over a field or peeking out of a forest. This spirit we sense in each locality would once have been described as the scintilla or spark of its soul, the pearl in the oyster. It accounts for the **magic of a region** and without it, an acute sense of place dissipates into a vague and lazy feeling of nowhere . . . It's when we lose a vivid sense of region and locality that the spirits of the place crawl back into hiding and human life becomes pale with the loss', Thomas Moore, *The Re-Enchantment of Everyday Life*.*

Your students' imaginative responses can be enriched and deepened when they begin with setting and focus on crafting an authentic place. Try the following strategies:

- Immerse your students in extracts from poems, short stories, novels, travel articles and films that develop place skilfully.
- Use photographs and encourage your students to take photographs.
- Get them to describe their world: the sights and sounds, and how they feel about this place.
- Teach them about synaesthesia so that they learn to blend the senses in their writing.

Students need to take note of the following:



- Zoom into the setting and focus on the details. Let the reader see the setting! This will not happen if they skim over the details. So much can be revealed when they do this. It could be a close-up on a photograph with shattered glass or a locket with a broken chain.
- Focus on the craft of writing: imagery, figurative devices, syntax, punctuation and structure. Synaesthesia – combining the senses – brings the writing to life!
- Ensure that the readers can ‘see’ the setting – don’t neglect those small details that can capture the essence of a place!
- Writers use pathetic fallacy to reflect the emotions of their characters or narrator. Get students to read the extract from Nam Le’s short story about his father ‘Love and Honour and Pity and Pride and Compassion and Sacrifice’ and then layer this approach into a 200-word extract.

‘... all I saw was a man coming toward me in a ridiculously oversized jacket, rubbing his black-sooted hands, stepping through the smoke with its flecks and flame-tinged eddies, who had destroyed himself, yet again, in my name. The river was behind him. The wind was full of acid. In the slow float of light I looked away, down at the river. On the brink of freezing, it gleamed in large, bulging blisters. The water, where it still moved, was black and braided. And it occurred to me then how it took hours, sometimes days, for the surface of a river to freeze over—to hold in its skin a perfect and crystalline world—and how that world could be shattered by a small stone dropped like a single syllable.’

The ideas

Students need to approach the imaginative response with a range of ideas that have been provoked by their exploration of a range of texts and their own lives. When a student has considered the key ideas, their imaginative responses are more focused and meaningful. The only warning is that they must not neglect the art of writing. The danger is that they can compose an imaginative response that is too general and ideas driven rather than one that engages the reader through artistry.

Suggested exercise

Try the following activity with your students:

1. Based on their exploration of a range of texts and their experiences of people and life what ideas do they have about the human condition?
2. Brainstorm a number of ideas using a mindmap. They could use spicynodes - <http://www.spicynodes.org/>.
3. Use a range of film clips and photographs to spark ideas, such as animations from the Vancouver film school on YouTube - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o31rcOUPviw>.
4. Once they have arrived at an idea, decide upon on the following:
 - a. Where the imaginative response could be set.
 - b. What type of character or characters move in this world.
 - c. The verbs that could be used to drive the idea.

- d. How they can weave in tension through language. They need to think about the sound and length of the words. Plosive consonants and short vowel sounds can convey discordance and unease.
- e. The figurative devices that could be used to convey the idea.
- f. The structure that could frame this idea. What opening and closing?
- g. The key incidents and details that frame this idea.

Characterisation

An imaginative response could be written through the eyes of a persona or it could feature the point of view of one or more characters through stream of consciousness. Students need to practise developing both approaches. They need to consider:

- Characterisation is that crafting of a character: the way a writer constructs his or her appearance, actions, attitudes, beliefs, relationships, words, experiences and life lessons.
- The most effective writing is based on student's lives and experiences. They need to consider the people they have met, even themselves and create one or more characters.
- The character's perception and how this perception has been shaped by his or her context, attitudes, assumptions, experiences, values, perspectives and perception.
- How to reveal the character's backstory in a few simple words or sentences.
- The dialogue and how it can be used to effectively capture and reflect the characters.
- How to represent the characters semiotically.
- Students need to revisit how to use the stream of consciousness for a character. They need to experience a range of approaches, such as the third person, the omniscient narrator and the direct address to the reader.

Ways to build characters and dialogue

- National Geographic faces of the world:
<http://travel.nationalgeographic.com.au/travel/your-faces-of-the-world-photos/>
- Paintings and photographs off the net.
- Build your wild self:
<http://www.buildyourwildself.com/> - Create a half-human half animal character and download them so that they can become the main character in a narrative or blog story.
- Voki: <http://www.voki.com/> - Create an avatar for a blog story or students can play with the crafting of a character. They can add setting, clothing and even record their character's voice.
- Cartoons: Using images to build characters and to develop effective dialogue:
- GoAnimate: <http://goanimate.com/>
- <http://www.makebeliefscomix.com/>
- Pixton Comics: <http://www.pixton.com/uk/home>
- <http://www.makebeliefscomix.com/>
- Toondoo: <http://www.toondoo.com/Home.toon>
- http://superherosquad.marvel.com/create_your_own_comic



Poetry

Poetry is a powerful way to teach students how to write well. Its concise form forces students to be economical and precise with words. It focuses them on the sound and feel of the words.

The following sites feature poetry and ways to create poetry:

- **Instant poetry:** <http://ettcweb.lrl.k12.nj.us/forms/newpoem.htm>: Students can create poetry at this site.
- **Poetica:** <http://www.abc.net.au/rn/poetica/default.htm> Poetry Podcasts from the ABC: Pupil can be inspired by the poetry that is read!
- **Wordle:** <http://www.wordle.net/> : Create a word cloud poem or use Wordle to revise poetic devices.
- **Sonnet Central:** <http://www.sonnets.org/> - access to hundreds of sonnets and recordings too inspire writing.
- **Poetry connection:** <http://www.poetryconnection.net/> - a range of poets and their poetry.
- **TATE William Blake:** <http://www2.tate.org.uk/williamblake/> - poetry and paintings by Blake.
- **Spicy Node Poems:** <http://www.spicynodes.org/teachers-3.html> - teacher resources that demonstrate how students can create a spicy node poem.
- **Knowing Poe:** http://knowingpoe.thinkport.org/default_flash.asp - Edgar Allan Poe's poetry and short stories.
- **Yeats' 'An Irish Airman Foresees his death':**
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tLvHTDa1fkE> – a moving animation of the famous poem.
- **Billy Collins' poetry:** 'Walking Across the Atlantic'
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ADCIXAjxe0M> 'Forgetfulness'
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n-a8ELOVig4>; 'Some Days'
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yaBeaQHDrGo>; 'Now and Then'
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k0xiWuwGq8M>; 'Budapest'
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vgnec1r9YuU> – America's former poet laureate's poetry animated evocatively.
- **Rap and performance poetry:**
 - Omar Musa, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3u8dz50GbVk> and My Generation
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_DtscGNZxn4, What will be left of us? (Dystopia)
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0YFSKhqC9rU>
 - Taylor Mali, What do teachers make?
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h5yg0u1MkDI>, Totally like whatever, you know,
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LGAMd-tT6fQ>
 - Sarah Kay, For my Daughter <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8sSfbQk7DxE>,
Hiroshima, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AXb9N2cVUs4>
 - Rick Mayall, The Theatre <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l0Ho9T2TcPY>
 - Maya Angelou And I still rise - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JqOqo50LSZ04>

Writing and Representation inspired by Fairy Tales



Background Information:

There have been many art works that have been based on famous fairy tales, such as the two Dina Goldstein's paintings featured that are based on Snow White and Sleeping Beauty.

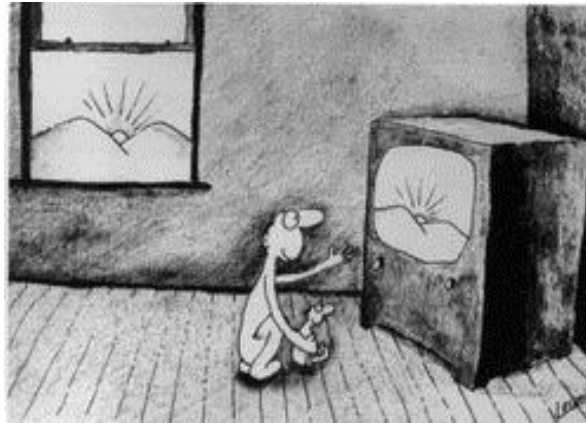


The Task:

Your task is to create an original representation on an A4 sheet and an accompanying narrative or poem that is inspired by a fairy tale, such as Rapunzel or Red Riding Hood. You can transport the fairy tale character to the present and imagine what their life would be like today or change the ending of the fairy tale, such as having the wicked stepmother in Snow White triumph.

| Marking Criteria | Writing | Representation |
|--|---------|----------------|
| Interpretation of the task | /5 | /5 |
| Creativity | /10 | /10 |
| The interconnectedness of the writing and the representation | /5 | /5 |
| The message conveyed by the representation and the writing | /10 | |
| Total | /50 | |

Persuasive Writing: Technology vs. Life



With a touch of a button we can be transported to amazing worlds, connect with people across the globe and access more information than humanity ever thought possible. We can twitter, skype, google, surf and blog but are we forgetting to make meaningful connections with nature and people?

Your grandparents raced home from school and probably played a game of cricket in the backyard, climbed trees and road their bikes through the neighbourhood. They wrote letters to family and friends, and had dinner at the dining room table with their parents. Is this still the world today? Do any of you race home and switch the computer on to check your Facebook page, maybe play a few online games and then eat dinner in front of the television?

The Government is concerned about your generation and future generations that are disconnecting from the natural world and each other. They have been debating whether they need to impose a number of mandatory restrictions on the use of technology. A National Commission has proposed the following actions:

- limiting the number of hours that young people at home can be online to two hours a day;
- stopping all television broadcasts between the hours of 4:00pm and 7:00pm; and,
- raising the age that people can play computer games to 18.

The National Commission has invited representatives of the youth of today to present their responses in writing. Your team has been selected to represent the young people of your school. Your team has to write a persuasive case for or against the proposed action. You have to capture their attention and present a convincing case in just **200 words!**

Your persuasive writing could be accompanied by one of the following:

- A power point or prezi with images and sound
- Catchy slogans or raps

Remember to be **persuasive** and **passionate!**

Writing and Representing inspired by Colour and Light

Objects reflect light in different ways. The wavelengths of these reflections determine the colour that our eyes and brain perceive. Without a light source to reflect from an object, we would not see any colour at all. The magical interplay of light and colour in different places in America influences the way we see and remember the special geographical features of these places.

The Task

Your task is to create an original poem and artwork inspired by the concept of how colour is associated with different places in America. Your team is to select a place and compose a poem and accompanying artwork that captures both light and the main colours associated with this place. The poem and artwork must be connected. Remember to include a key message connected to colour. You must include the following components:

- A focus on colour and light
- An extended metaphor related to colour
- At least one example of alliteration and emotive language

Components

Explain briefly how you have incorporated the following in your poem. Explanations are worth 5 marks.

- A focus on colour and light (2 marks)
- An extended metaphor related to colour (1 mark)
- At least one example of alliteration (1 mark)
- At least one example of emotive language (1 mark)

| Marking Criteria | Poem | Art |
|--|---|----------------|
| Interpretation of the task | 0 1 2 3 4 5 | 0 1 2 3 4 5 |
| Creativity using the components in the poem and the materials in the artwork | Focus on c & l: 0 1 2 Extended metaphor: 0 1 1 Alliteration: 0 1 Emotive language: 0 1 | 0 1 2 3 4 5 |
| The interconnectedness of the poetry and the art | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 | 9 10 |
| The message conveyed through the art and poetry about light and colour | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 | 9 10 |
| TOTAL | /40 | |

Figurative Devices

Poem = 10 marks

Devices = 5 marks



Using the above image, create an original poem that contains at least **five** of the following:

Simile
Metaphor
Zoomorphism
Sibilants
Enjambment
Alliteration
Onomatopoeia
Assonance
Consonance
Apostrophe
Synaesthesia
Pathetic Fallacy
Apostrophe
Oxymoron
Synecdoche

Enriching Writing

Muscles of Writing – the Verbs!

Let the Great World Spin – Colum McCann

*The orange streetlight from the window **latticed** him as he crossed the floor at a clip.*

*Some swallows **scissored** out from underneath the rafters.*

Gabriel's Oboe – Jason Oh

*Composed, he **breathes** life into the oboe. The melancholy melody fills the room, **swirling** around the child. He **pours** out his desires, his fears, his delights; the music softly **croons** its reply. They **dance** through valleys of shadow, **comforted** by the other's presence.*

Mister Pip – Lloyd Jones

*Our houses sat **beached** in a sloppy row, all of them **gaping** back at the sea.*

Activity

1. Discuss as a class how the verbs have contributed to the meaning of the sentences.
2. Describe the following using striking verbs that are **polysemic**.
 - a. Rain falling at the close of a hot day.

.....
.....

- b. Being caught in a snarling traffic jam in Sydney.

.....
.....

- c. Sharing dinner at the family table.

.....
.....

Enriching Writing

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Activity

3. Discuss as a class how the verbs have contributed to the meaning of the sentences.
4. Describe the following using striking verbs that are **polysemic**.
 - d. Rain falling at the close of a hot day.

.....

.....

- e. Being caught in a snarling traffic jam in Sydney.

.....

.....

- f. Sharing dinner at the family table.

.....

.....

Visceral Imagery

Extract: *Past the Shallows* - Favel Parrett

Behind a shrub, a pile of shells. A giant pile – old and brittle and white from the sun. Oyster and mussel, pipi and clam, the armour of a giant crab. Harry picked up an abalone shell, the edges loose and dusty in his hands. And every cell in his body stopped. Felt it. This place. Felt the people who had been here before, breathing and standing alive where he stood. People who were long dead now. Long gone. And Harry understood, right down in his guts, that time ran on forever and that one day he would die. The skin on his hands tingled and pricked. He dropped the shell and ran.

How does Parrett use syntax to convey Harry's emotional response to the setting?

.....

.....

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Extracts: *Let the Great World Spin* – Colum McCann

1. *Around the watchers, the city still made its everyday noises. Car horns. Garbage trucks. Ferry whistles. The thrum of the subway. The M22 bus pulled in against the sidewalk, braked, sighed down into a pothole. A flying chocolate wrapper touched against a fire hydrant. Taxi doors slammed. Bits of trash sparred in the darkest reaches of the alleyways. The leather of briefcases rubbed against trouserlegs. A few umbrella tips clinked against the pavement. Revolving doors pushed quarters of conversation out into the street.*

How does McCann use language to evoke the setting in the Bronx?

.....

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Narrative Planning

Orientation

- Good openings catch the reader's interest
- Show not tell
- Tense and person

Structure

- Orientation
- Complication
- Resolution
- Coda
- Motif
- Tension
- Variation: circular, flashback, multiple perspectives, stream of consciousness

Ideas

- Paired metaphors
- Current headlines
- Your core values: Integrity, honesty, compassion, empathy

Characterisation

- Voice
- Motives and role
- Appearance: the eyes, movements, dress,
- Relationships
- Actions
- Striking adjectives and verbs
- Dialogue: authentic

Style - Sentences

- Vary sentence starters
- Variety of sentence types and lengths: simple, compound, complex, declarative, exclamatory, truncated, etc.

Incidents

- Start in the middle of the action
- Write from experience
- Show don't tell!
- Leave something for the reader's imagination

Setting

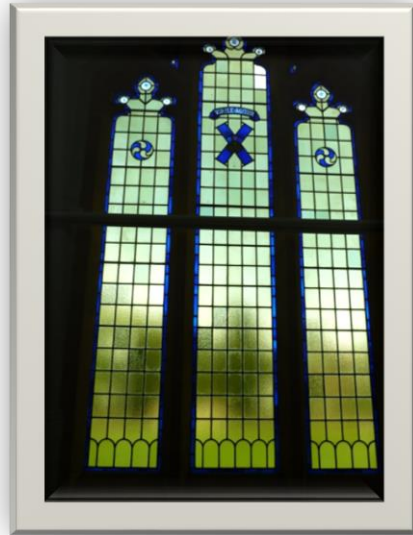
- Orient the reader through setting
- Time, place, weather, colours
- The senses: look, feel, sound like
- Pathetic fallacy: nature

Style – Word Choice

- Person: First, second or third
- Striking verbs
- Colourful adjectives
- Use precise nouns
- Nominalisation
- Sounds: Consonants and vowels – fricative, discordant, etc.
- Imagery: figurative devices, sound devices, symbolism

2012 Global English Writing Competition

Through My Window



Ciame is from the Far North Coast of NSW. She describes what she sees from her farmhouse window.

Through my Window

I'm sitting on the edge of my bed
with a large, golden dog at my feet.
The room has stained white walls
and glossy frames.
There is a bookcase full of fantasy novels
in the corner,
On top of the bookcase is a stereo
playing an old song from the eighties.
As I look out my window I see
the old silky oak with its green leaves
and yellow blossoms.
Their bright colour contrasts with the dull green of the leaves.
In the giant shadow of the oak
there is a herb garden,
and through the window I smell rosemary and lavender,
mixed with the spice of chili and the fresh sweet scent of mint and basil.
A black neighbourhood cat
stalks the lorikeets feeding on the red brush box blossoms.
As he jumps they fly away screeching
setting off a storm of bird song around the neighbouring yards.
Past the rotting back fence,
there is the elderly Italian man
working in his vegetable garden.

Further out over the town and the mountains
that form the west wall of the valley,
the golden sun sets in the purple tinted sky.
As I walk over to close the window,
the brilliant sun sunset ends
and the first star of the night appears.
Natural beauty is special.
Move into its world and feel its magic.

The Challenge

When we look out of the windows of our homes we see a unique world. We might see an old oak tree and a garden filled with colourful flowers or a city street with cars rushing by and tall buildings casting long shadows.

Your task is to look outside your window or a window of your imagination and write a descriptive response. You could be looking through an aircraft window that makes you think about the place you have left or the place you are going to visit. You could be looking through a dollhouse window and remembering when you were little or looking through a scuba diver's mask and seeing the beautiful coral and the brightly coloured tropical fish.

Remember to describe what you see vividly so that your reader can 'see' what you see. The maximum word count is 300, so you will need to keep your writing tight and focused. You can write a description or a poem using any medium as long as it can be uploaded to the wiki.

Marking Criteria

| Criteria | Sound | Effective | Skilful |
|--|-------|--------------|------------|
| Exploration of the world through a real or imaginary window | 1-2 | 3-4 | 5 |
| Engaging descriptive writing | 1-2 | 3-4 | 5 |
| Control of language and structure appropriate to audience, purpose and selected form | 1-2 | 3-4 | 5 |
| | | TOTAL | /15 |

Through my window

What I can see is the green fuzzy grass, the brown trees, and the reflection of me.

What I can see are leaves falling and acorns falling and usually dogs that are stalling.

What I can see is a track and people running and having so much fun.

What I can see are houses at day mice at night but don't forget the squirrels that fight

What I can see wide black cars passing by and a lot of the times birds that fly.

What I see the black street my big porch but also a torch that lights up the house when it's dark.

What I can see are memories framed by this window that I will never forget.

Landon, Year 4 Bradfield Elementary Texas

The Window

By Georgia year 7, Dalbeattie High School Scotland

Thin, glass barrier
Pane, frame, keeps the outside out
Things inside, kept in.

The moon was full and bright and lit up the dirt road leading into the dark, looming forest. The tall willow trees swayed angrily in the icy gale and the jagged branches up high creaked and cracked as the trunks below were violently pushed. A tattered and scarred wanderer staggered across the empty road searching for food, warmth and comfort, His hopes were falling quickly and his lungs struggled with every breath, but he kept walking on and on, up the path. Through the tremendous storm and the cruel ice winds he saw a warm orange glow through a tunnel of trees.

His chance was here; his prayers had been answered, so he entered the creaking woods, vulnerable to anything lurking in the darkness. His heart was pounding and his legs were shaky and sore but he couldn't stop now, not this close to shelter. The orange light grew closer with every step the wanderer took and soon he was at the end of the tunnel. He turned his weary head and saw nothing behind just the blackness of the forest.

And then he saw it, a large Victorian house with white marble steps and twisting silver banisters. Through the window he saw a warm orange fire that lit up the heart of the forest and on that window were the same lace curtains the wanderer had in his childhood home. Quickly, but gently the door opened, like a gateway to heaven, letting the heat engulf the wanderers tired body.

With every last muscle he made his way into the wonderful, cosy house but everything changed as the door slammed shut behind him and the walls spun around his head. The fire rose taller and fiercer then it burnt out. The light had gone. The house was empty, with only the moonlight shining

through the clear window. Everything was silent and the wanderer knew why. He had entered the house of the orphan child, the child in the stories, the child who had wandered in, been locked alone, left starving, the child that wanted a friend.

The wanderer knew he had no chance, no choice, no freedom. These fearful moments would be his last, but what caused him most anxiety was what was to come. He had still to meet the orphan child in this empty room. Then his mind stopped and his body was consumed in an icy cold. The creaks behind him, the floorboards warning him that the child had come. He took his last breath, twisting his head to look at what would be his final sight and there he saw it. An apprehensive, lonely child, was shaking in the corner, weak and tense.

Was it the ghost? Were the legends true? Whatever it was the wanderer knew he had to escape...at least try too. The room was dark but the wanderer managed to reach the door. Was he really going to survive the orphan child from the stories? He pushed hard and strong with his sweat soaked palms but the door would not give way. And from the corner, the wanderer heard the high pitched whines of a child. His body was too weak to run and his voice was too hurt to call for help, so as he lay on the floor he tried to save his own, helpless, self. "Don't hurt me child," groaned the wanderer, "I come in peace, I will not disturb you." The child looked at him, his face as white as snow, almost as though every feature, emotion and colour had been drained away.

To the wanderers surprise the child did not hurt him, but held his hand tightly. There was a loud crack, the wanderer turned to see a large silver framed mirror, cracking and splitting as chunks of his reflection fell away to leave the ghost child's writing imprinted on the glass, "STAY." The wanderer hesitated, what did it mean? Was he really imprisoned? He turned his head, the fire was back on, the cobwebs had disappeared, and the lace curtains were hanging sweetly next to a mirror in perfect condition. A warm leather sofa had been laid out in front of the orange blaze.

The wanderer was positive that his mind had fooled him but part of his soul was yelling for him to escape. But he couldn't leave this wonderful house, how he longed for some rest and comfort. He lay down on the sofa and closed his drowsy eyes, and then...he fell in deep sleep.

There he slept all warm and cosy, in a quaint, perfect room, protected from the outside. Keeping the heat in was a thick wooden door, and in front of that door stood a little ghost child. Its eyes were black and its face was a sickly pale. It smiled. Everything fell silent. It had found its friend.

When dawn came and the sun rose high above, the forest burst into life, the house was just as perfect, with its marble stairs and twisting silver banisters. At the window, with the little lace curtains, was the face of a trapped wanderer, white and emotionless and behind him was a dark figure of a ghostly child.

Thin, glass barrier
Wanderer inside, kept in
His pain framed by lace.

Anthea
Brigidine College, Randwick
Year 8

My pale, slim feet pad across the carpeted hallway, heading straight for my parents' room. My breathing abruptly becomes faster, harsher, more urgent. I can't stop the panic that freezes my insides, I can only grope along the hallway, ignore the cruel world of darkness pressing in on me, and run to the soft white light glowing from my parents' room.

As my toes edge into the room, they curl and flex in pleasure. I step into the glow and a shudder of joy ripples through me as my breathing slowly becomes regular, quiet and peaceful. Knowing I can't risk waking my parents, I dance across the room, my white nightdress floating behind me. The ribbon falls out of my long red plait as I kneel on the ornate window seat underneath the huge glass pane and stare out at what I love most, the source of light in the darkness, like water in the middle of the desert. The moon.

Grand, huge and dazzlingly luminous, it sits regally in the sky, lighting the rooftops of the city, illuminating my mother's sleeping face, making my auburn hair glow eerily. Thin wisps of cloud create artistic shadows over the white, pure surface. I settle on the seat and gaze at the moon, as I do every night, and always will for the rest of my life. A lullaby enters my head as I blink at what I believe is the essence of my existence. My mother sung it to me when I was a baby, and has, every night, for 13 years.

*She sits in the sky
Silent and gorgeous; the moon
White and forbidding.*

*Her face is mournful,
Wrinkled, yet youthful and wise.
Light in the darkness.*

*She provides pure light
Is perfectly round and cries
For her lost love- sun.*

I always thought that that lullaby was sad- beautiful, but so mournful and lost. It seems like the moon is always waiting for the sun to join her, although she knows that can never be, for the sun and the moon cannot both light the sky. The moon is beautiful and adored, needed by werewolves, loved by me, wise and knowing, regal and perfect. But unhappy.

The next afternoon, I see a crescent moon, faint in the bold blue sky, but unmistakeably there. And I know that the moon is trying to find the sun, and a single tear slides down my cheek, because I can see her struggling and I know that she will never find him.

2013 English Competition: Celebrating Diversity of Place

The Challenge

In Australia, we have beautiful beaches. This is a photograph of Lennox Head on the Far North Coast of New South Wales that is famous for its great surfing spots, green valleys and rich red volcanic soil.

Each one of you lives in a unique place that is characterized by its geography, history, pastimes, culture, politics and people. Your challenge is to create an imaginative piece of writing in a form of your choice that is centered on something that is unique about your place.



You could write a piece that celebrates local food, or a short story that focuses on a unique pastime that is place such as surfing, or a short narrative about an important historical moment that has shaped your place.

To add to the challenge your imaginative piece must feature the following:

- At least one metaphor - 1 mark
- At least two examples of alliteration and onomatopoeia - 2 marks
- A main colour that reflects your place. This colour should be used as a motif that threads your piece together. E.g. Blue for Australia's oceans or red for its deserts. 3 marks

Marking Criteria

| Criteria | Sound | Effective | Skilful |
|--|-------|--------------|------------|
| Exploration of the uniqueness of place | 1-2 | 3-4 | 5 |
| Engaging imaginative writing | 1-2 | 3-4 | 5 |
| Control of language and structure appropriate to audience, purpose and selected form | 1-2 | 3-4 | 5 |
| Additional challenge: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Metaphor• Alliteration and onomatopoeia• Colour as a motif | 1-2 | 3-4 | 5 |
| | | TOTAL | /20 |

The Pink Stripe in the Sky

She sits between worlds.

Watching as the night fades into black.

Between the Gods she shines.

She sits silently among the stars; she anticipates the dawn when she can be reborn. Blissfully gliding through the ageless heavens, she stays between the fighting forces.

She's the vein of the universe, an iridescent shade of pink. Moving peacefully from shades of the universe.

Night and Day are constantly at war. Each side wishing they could have more and more energy. The universe is always at war, never peaceful like the pink stripe, even as they try with all their might.

Her listless eyes may not linger, for the as unfortunately the battles end as swiftly as the lift of a finger.

This is the turmoil behind her birth. This is the endless chaos that evokes her wake.

She is ethereal as if she is no being, yet in the stripe's peaceful bliss I find myself lost without meaning.

She lays about the sky's horizon, her lustful pink glare bouncing in awe of her glory.

The sun seems jealous of her desire for the world's watchful eye. The Night in its mischievousness taunts the prideful sun. The sun's anger grows as the world begins to awaken.

The Night grows fearful, hiding itself from the Sun's heated wrath. Shrinking beneath the translucent stripes, bathing in the stars as if they were bathing in the twilight. The Pink Stripe is alone, looking innocent and feeble against the sun's glare. Almost as feeble as a spark compared to a flare.

Wrath is quite overwhelming and the Pink Stripe knows this best. She hides away and the remaining aura she leaves behind is washed away by the callous Sun.

The dawn slowly rears her head forward, bringing forth light and life into the world as the Night shrieks away.

The world is awakened again.

Like a Pied Piper, the sun's presence beckons forth a horde of cars and trucks. Already set on their paths to their purposes like a flock of ducks.

The world thinks little of the Pink Stripe, ignoring the new chaos in the heavens every new morning.

She slowly fades away back into the ethereal, melting into the fabric of the sky, seemingly never to be seen again.

The few weary eyes that look up and for a glistening second as they see her fade, they think different thoughts.

And life continues on, as ignorant as a rhino charging in rage.

So she's gone again.

Faded into the sky, gone forever.

Wait for tomorrow. `

--- Cole Hall North Stokes High School, Carolina, US

4 haikus by Rui Morishita, year 12, Rikkyo Niiza High School, Japan

1

By the spring wind
Looking at the plum trees
Never to find myself asleep

2

Rainy season has set in
With moisture, without pollen
I'll be free from allergy

3

In May
I can finally put away
My winter clothes

4

Humid and warm wind
Tells me the rainy season is around
Unpleasant

Colours of the Rainbow

Dedicated to the ethereal beauty that surrounds my country

The colours of the rainbow
As I so justly know,
Are not just colours
They are much more:

Our freedom fighters came home soaked in red-
The colour of danger,

The symbol of dread
The orange in our flag
stands tall and proud,
Waving with elegance,
Over the great big crowd
Our fields of sarson,
With yellow all around
ss-ss-ss-ss, sh-sh-sh-sh,
give out delicate sounds
Our great big forests,
With dashes of green
Stand tall in the sun
With everlasting sheen
T'was poison he drank,
And hence became blue
The immortal Shiva:
Listening to whose stories we grew
Indigo and Violet,
The colours of love,
Which bind us together
When push comes to shove

That is why I say, you see
And perhaps even you all will agree
That the colours of the rainbow
Are, as you now know
Not just colours for an Indian
They are much more.....

-Vistaar; Class XI-A Mira Model School New Delhi, India

2013 Primary Global English Writing Competition: The Fascinating Adventures of Teddy

The Challenge

Our imaginations take us to amazing places. When you were little you created adventures for your treasured toys and travelled with them to faraway lands. Poet Sara Stowell wrote:

*There's a spot in the garden of childhood,
That children and adults can share;
A place in the heart and memory,
For one's very own stuffed teddy bear.*

A.A.Milne in his book *The Many Adventures of Winnie the Pooh* begins Pooh's adventures with this opening:

"This could be the room of any small boy, but it just happens to belong to a boy named Christopher Robin. Like most small boys, Christopher Robin has toy animals to play with, and they all live together in a wonderful world of make-believe. But his best friend is a bear called Winnie the Pooh, or Pooh, for short. Now, Pooh had some very unusual adventures, and they all happened right here in the Hundred-Acre Wood."



Paddington Bear who travelled to many exciting places turns 55 this year. In his first adventure he travelled from Peru to London:

"I used to live with my Aunt Lucy in Peru, but she had to go into a home for retired bears."
"You don't mean to say you've come all the way from South America by yourself?"
exclaimed Mrs Brown.
The bear nodded. "Aunt Lucy always said she wanted me to emigrate when I was old enough. That's why she taught me to speak English."

Your challenge is to use **some** or **all** of the photographs provided and describe the adventures of Teddy. Your story should not exceed 500 words.

If you would like to use another toy or a real life animal you can write a story about their adventures instead! Remember to include photographs of their adventures.

This activity could be done by a class instead of individual students.

Every student will receive a certificate for their entry. First, second and third places will be awarded to the following two categories:

1. Years 1-4
2. Years 5 – 6

The Fascinating Adventures of Teddy







Marking Criteria

| Criteria | Sound | Effective | Skilful |
|--|-------|-----------|---------|
| Originality of the adventure story | 1-2 | 3-4 | 5 |
| Engaging descriptive writing | 1-2 | 3-4 | 5 |
| Control of language and structure appropriate to audience, purpose and selected form | 1-2 | 3-4 | 5 |
| | | TOTAL | /15 |

Greeny and I

One morning Greeny and I were playing. Then we went to our back yard. We asked our mum, if we could go out on an adventure and she said “yes”. Our plane was a Qantas plane. It could go very fast and it could fly by itself. We were going to Hong Kong, China, the North Pole, to see Santa and to go to Canberra. We packed everything we needed and the plane could give us whatever we wanted and we had flight crew on the plane. Then we decided to go to Chocolate Land. It was Greeny’s favourite place to go. It was full of dark creamy chocolate. That is why Greeny and I loved it .But when we got there, there was no chocolate. Greeny and I were upset. Then we saw why we were upset because the chocolate was all gone because the pipe was blocked. That’s when Greeny and I fixed it with strawberry bubble gum. Then we bought milk chocolate. We went back on the plane.

Next we went to China. We did not know a thing so we went to the hotel. It was really nice. When it was night time we went back on our giant Qantas plane. After that we went to Canberra to see Miss Trood, TJ and Big Ted. We were very happy when we made it there. In the morning we had a delicious buffet breakfast. When night came, we were back on the plane. Greeny and I

were very tired so we had a rest. When we got up we had a warm bath then we went to the North Pole. We were rushing to the North Pole to see Santa. We helped him make presents but then we were out of toys for kids and it was almost Christmas Day. So we went to every toy shop in the North Pole. We found some presents. We got a lot of toys from Santa. Our final stop was Hong Kong. We saw a MTR subway. We did not know where we were going but we went back to our house. We had a big dinner and tea party with our mum and then it was time for bed. We fell fast asleep.

By Kiran Year 1 Knox Grammar



PB BEAR'S ADVENTURE (A true story about my bear PB and our adventures)

This is the story of my best friend PB and our adventures. It all began in Dumfries, Scotland on a wet



and windy day. I found PB in a little charity store called The Red Cross. It was mascot day at my new school in Dalbeattie where you had to bring in a toy for your sporting house. As soon as I got inside there was PB, sitting right up on the top shelf waiting for somebody to pick him up. I called excitedly to mum,

"Look mum up there!" I said, "It's the perfect teddy."



We picked out some blue baby clothes and put them on PB. He really liked them. We took him back home and washed him in the washing machine. PB wasn't very happy about being put in with all the washing. The next day it was mascot day. When we got to school I had to put PB in the hall. He was right at the back when they announced the winners but PB didn't win. It didn't matter to me; I thought he was the greatest bear in the world.

A few weeks later we were so excited because we were going on an adventure to Spain. We were getting ready to land in Spain. "Hold on tight" I muttered to PB as the plane dipped and dived. We stayed in a Villa that had a pool and we were able to eat yummy food like prawns. We spent two wonderful weeks in Spain, swimming and visiting ancient sites. PB even speaks a bit of Spanish now:



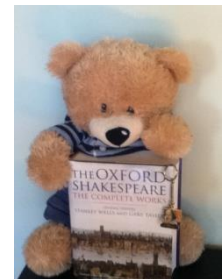
"Muchos Gracias amigo!"

Once again we arrived back in the cold weather of Scotland but not for long; we had to get ready for another adventure! We were heading off to the Globe Theatre in London to see *The*

Taming of the Shrew. What a fabulous play! After London it was time to head south to Cornwall and more Shakespeare at the Minnack theatre. The seats had all the names of we met a jokes. PB likes



Shakespeare's plays on them. We also travelled to Port Isaac where postman delivering letters. He was very nice and told us some funny to laugh.



You would think that PB would be tired of travelling by now but he just kept going. The green shores of Ireland, then on to Cyprus for a holiday. There were so many cats that we even counted them one afternoon but stopped at about 1000. It was so much fun. We even adopted a donkey called 'Paul- Rango'.



PB and I also travelled to New York. We saw the statue of liberty and PB thought she was so beautiful that he fell in love. There would only be one more stop before home to Australia and that country was Hawaii. In Hawaii we were right near the beach. PB and I were so excited because there was a POOL.



Eventually after a year full of adventures we finally returned back to Australia...for a rest!

By Jacinta (8 Years old) Thiroulle Primary

Operation Olax

It was an icy, wet, dark night. Agent Ted Tough had been sitting in his car for two hours now. The only thing that stopped him thinking about his warm, cosy bed with its soft, plump pillow was his super dooper car. It had been built by the Teddies On Patrol (TOP) according to his own strict instructions. Its windows were bullet proof and its doors were made from adamantium -a man made indestructable metal. He pressed a button and watched as the steaming hot chocolate poured from its dispenser. It warmed his tummy as he slowly sipped it down his throat. Its familiar fragrance awakened him. He had had enough of this waiting and decided to go in. Ignoring his mission instructions he jumped out of the car and headed towards his target.

TOP had been tracking Wicked Will for many months now and they had never been closer. They had uncovered Will's plot to transform Australia's free country citizens into his slaves. Will had designed an invisible gas called Olax which he was going to release into the vents of Parliament House and wipe out Australia's leaders. Sneaking up the path to Parliament House Ted Tough spied Wicked Will sitting upon a column. Will was pretending to be a lost toy. Ted bit his lip in concentration as sweat dripped from his brow. "I'll sneak up behind the outer wall from out of sight and grab him," he thought. Just then Ted Tough's plan was ruined - he crashed to the ground as Wicked Will had taken him by surprise!



When Ted came to, he found himself on top of a railing ledge with Wicked Will just about to push him over. How Wicked Will managed to drag him up there was unknown.

"You nasty bag of bones, I should have thrown you out with the garbage in our last match," Tough Ted shouted to the thug.

"Look below Tough Ted, see what awaits you," Wicked Will bellowed back.

Just then they were both distracted by the sound of the clock striking and Tough Ted managed to climb to safety while Wicked Will was angry for not tossing him overboard sooner.

Suddenly Wicked Will was out of there and had made his way to the flag pole. Ted Tough hated this creature. This time he had really made him lose it. He gave chase shooting past the Asian tourists who were taking photos of them as they ran past.



Night was falling by now and Tough Ted put on his Gamma Glasses which gave him X-Ray vision. Wicked Will was half way up the mast with Tough Ted close behind.

"Do you fear death?" Tough Ted yelled up to Wicked Will.

"I'll take my chances," Wicked Will cried back.

Moments later the two struggled and a crowd gathered watching below. The wind picked up and Wicked Will, not as tough as Ted, found himself flapping in the wind like the flag above.

And that was it. Wicked Will dived into the pool below escaping into the sewer. Tough Ted slid down the flag pole. The Government would be thankful but TOP would be furious!

By Aaron
Year 4 Knox Preparatory School

2013 Semester 2 English Competition: To see a World in a Grain of Sand...

The Challenge

The English poet William Blake penned a beautiful poem 'Auguries of Innocence' about the wonder and beauty of the world, and how it can be appreciated on a micro-level:

*To see a World in a Grain of Sand
And a Heaven in a Wild Flower,
Hold Infinity in the palm of your hand
And Eternity in an hour.*



American poet Emily Dickinson who delighted in the beauty of nature wrote, 'Bring me the sunset in a cup'. Japanese poets mastered the art of precision and fusion when they crafted haikus that captured a single moment in 17 syllables. Matsuo Basho was one of Japan's most famous haiku composers. Normally the first line is 5 syllables, the second line 7 syllables and the last line 5 syllables. Basho regularly broke this rule and focused more on the image and the sound.

*At the ancient pond
a frog plunges into
the sound of water*

*The lightning flashes
And slashing through the darkness,
A night-heron's screech.*

A writer is an observer of life with an eye for detail. They notice the little things in life like the dewdrops on a petal or a spider dancing in the breeze on a silvery web.

Your challenge is to choose an object and use it as a trigger for an imaginative piece of writing that features one or more haikus. Your object could be a shell, a locket, a teddy bear, bird, the moon, a photograph, a famous painting...the possibilities are endless. The haiku must focus on the object and reveal something about its appearance or how you feel about it. You could begin with a haiku and end with a haiku. The second haiku could further your message or convey a special insight or epiphany into the importance of the object to you or others.

Marking Criteria

| Criteria | Sound | Effective | Skilful |
|--|-------|-----------|---------|
| Original use of an object as a trigger for the writing | 1-2 | 3-4 | 5 |
| Engaging imaginative writing | 1-2 | 3-4 | 5 |
| Control of language and structure appropriate to audience, purpose and selected form | 1-2 | 3-4 | 5 |
| Meaningful use of haiku | 1-2 | 3-4 | 5 |
| TOTAL | | | /20 |

The Fly – Corey Year 7 Knox Grammar School

*Dashing through the skies,
Ever moving, ever swift,
Slow, the fly knows not.*

Bam! The fly darted off, swift like the wind, silent like the shadows, the inevitable hand of death in close pursuit. Swish! Darting left and right, a pinprick of movement amongst the watching world, it zoomed across the table, over the chair, and through the opened window.

“And don’t come back again!” a grovelling voice boomed after the fly.

Not daring to look back, the fly continued, barely listening to his words of discourages. The fly needed no urging on, three times in the past hour had he been chased away by troubled humans. They had no reasoning to be so hostile, as far as the fly was concerned. Entering one’s home, and helping yourself to some of their food did not come across as rude or inappropriate behaviour to the fly.

*In tides of abhor,
Impaired by its own instinct,
Know, the fly does not.*

Off once again, the fly sliced off towards the fast-disappearing glare of the sun on the horizon. As the last strands of daylight drifted through the trees, slowly blending into the oncoming darkness, his hope also slowly diminished. Yet another day had gone by; disgust, hostility, stereotypical opinions were ruling his pitiful existence.

The fly knew none of this, of course. The assumption of his fate made him think that this was the way to live, and nothing of the better he thought possible. Yet there were ways to live much more ideally; Utopian, and just as much strange they would appear to the life of the fly.

*The fly’s pitiful
Being; Of better; Of Worse
No, the fly thinks not.*

Swiftly darting once again around and round the neighbourhood, the fly begins to contemplate the worth and purpose of his actions. What would come from all this monotony: Flying, chasing, and eating. It bears no thought to think of the outcomes, it was too big a thought for the fly to contain. And so he went on, continuing what he does best: relying on his unquestioned instincts to fill his life of repetition and hostility.

*The monotony;
The repetition of life;
Change, he wishes not.*

As the night wore on, morning fast approaching, the darkness retreating, still the fly goes. His never fulfilling hunger, a desire for truth of his existence entangled his thoughts. A net, of which blocked all other thoughts from entering his conscience. Subconsciously, he continued his work of scavenging for food, but in his mind, he was an endless stream of question, thoughts, and confusion. He wants to know why, but such was his life that any change from his lifestyle, will just lead to separation, and death inevitably.

But does he want to know the answer? Will the truth of your existence render your life seemingly pointless, unsophisticated, or boringly monotonous? Will you not be able to handle the truth?

*A thirst; A hunger,
For answers you'll never know,
Facts you wish were not.*

English Competition: Through My Eyes

The Challenge

Your challenge is to compose an original story or poem about something in the natural world, such as a beautiful rose, a snail with its shimmery trail, a tiger with its ferocious roar, an eagle soaring high in the skies surveying the world below... Nature is teeming with life so you have a rich and varied choice of something to write about.

The poem or story must be from the perspective of what you have chosen and you have to take an original photograph or draw an original picture of what you are writing about. Imagine the story that a whale or an ant could tell you, or the sad tale that a huge tree in a rainforest could tell as it watches its home being destroyed by chain saws.

You need to include the following:

- An original poem or story from the viewpoint of the subject you have chosen.
- An original photograph or drawing of the subject.
- A clear connection between the photograph or the drawing and the story or poem.
- Striking verbs and adjectives.
- At least one simile.

The series of photographs that follow were captured on camera in different parts of Australia and Hawaii. Discuss with your teacher the poem or story that you write for each of the subjects in the photographs.



Your eyes stare at me
Wild beast beautiful and proud
Who so freely roamed...
Regal Sumatran Tiger

Marking Criteria

| Criteria | Sound | Effective | Skilful |
|--|-------|-----------|---------|
| Original photograph, or drawing connected to the story or poem | 1-2 | 3-4 | 5 |
| Engaging and original imaginative writing | 1-2 | 3-4 | 5 |
| Control of language and structure appropriate to audience, purpose and selected form | 1-2 | 3-4 | 5 |
| Meaningful use of the key ingredients | 1-2 | 3-4 | 5 |
| TOTAL | | | /20 |

Through My Eyes

Imagine what story the following animals, birds and flowers could tell you!



Awesome Pig

By Alex Year 3, Knox Grammar School

Why would anyone write a poem about a pig?
When people write poetry about the wonders of nature
They think about birds soaring, cheetahs dashing and flowers blooming
But not about me

So I thought I would write a poem about myself
So I wouldn't be left out
Because I am an awesome, admirable and pretty astonishing pig
A tremendous, inspiring and very surprising pig

I am very clean - although I play in squishy mud
I have a bath afterwards, and I only pee in one corner
And I tidy up by pushing the hay in a pile with my snout
"You eat like a pig" is just wrong - I eat just like humans!!

I truly adore sunbathing – relaxing on a warm day
It makes me feel calm and sleepy
I see beautiful things like birds soaring, trees waving
And clouds floating by like pillows falling from the heavens

I love to listen to lots of different music
Like the farmer's radio playing
rock like ACDC and Smashing
Pumpkins
And birds singing, bees
buzzing and frogs croaking -
And I really like my mummy
singing soft lullabies to me.

I am tremendously playful – I
love to dash around my pen
Playing football with turnips
and cabbages
And I am exceptionally brainy
I bet you didn't know that I am
just as intelligent as a dog

But most of all I am a
slumbering pig
I sleep cuddled up on a comfy pile of my brothers and sisters
Dreaming about rainbows and sunshine and flying pigs on mountains
I have totally amazing dreams – because I am an awesome pig!



WeWrite2connect Secondary English Competition:

The Challenge: Ekaphrasis

Photographs, posters, symbols...our imagination is sparked by images. The images can capture a significant moment in time, trigger unexpected memories of the past, transport us to imaginary places or provoke thought about life's endless possibilities and mysteries. They can be an evocative frame for a story of a past event or a single event in an individual's life.

A poem based on a photograph, image or artwork is referred to as an ekaphrasis. Poet Mary Jo Bang describing her poetry in response to artworks stated *'I am taking an existing work of art and rewriting over it. I'm imposing a new narrative on it, one that is partially suggested by the artwork itself and partially by something that comes from within.'* In Ancient Greece, the poet tried to uncover the stories behind the paintings. The famous poet John Keats describes a Grecian urn that inspired him to contemplate truth and beauty:

*When old age shall this generation waste,
Thou shalt remain, in midst of other woe
Than ours, a friend to man, to whom thou say'st,
"Beauty is truth, truth beauty,—that is all
Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know."*

Visit this site to read a range of poetry inspired by famous paintings and statues:
<http://valerie6.myweb.uga.edu/ekphrasticpoetry.html>.

The series of photographs that follow were captured on camera in different parts of Australia and Europe. When you look at each one ponder where the shots were taken and imagine the story that could be connected to the images.

Your challenge is to compose an original story or poem that has been inspired by a photograph you have taken or an image that has captured your attention. You need to include the following:

- The photograph or image
- A clear connection between the photograph or the image and the story or poem.
- At least one metaphor and one simile.
- A 150 word statement to accompany the story or poem that explains how and why you were inspired.

Marking Criteria

| Criteria | Sound | Effective | Skilful |
|--|-------|--------------|------------|
| Original use of a photograph, image or painting as a trigger for the writing | 1-2 | 3-4 | 5 |
| Engaging and original imaginative writing | 1-2 | 3-4 | 5 |
| Control of language and structure appropriate to audience, purpose and selected form | 1-2 | 3-4 | 5 |
| Meaningful use of the key ingredients | 1-2 | 3-4 | 5 |
| Clear explanation of inspiration provided by image | 1-2 | 3-4 | 5 |
| | | TOTAL | /25 |

Ekaphrasis



Face the Music – Stephanie, Sydney Girls HS

She stood on the kerb as the whirring traffic buzzed and weaved in front of her. The thunderous screams and calls of pedestrians pierced the silence of another monotonous afternoon in the city. Her toes curled tenaciously in her shoes, her gaze transfixed to the bus timetable. She was enveloped in an orb of fear, a cascading mountain of worries strained in the furrowed creases of her brow and forehead. In her hands she cradled her violin. With a veiled look of distress, she drummed her feet on the ink black concrete.

The emptiness she felt still resonated through the tight walls of her head. The overwhelming charge of emotion crept under her face, painting her cheeks a fiery rosy hue. The anger had well up, ignited like a flame as blasphemy spat from her mouth, cruel words and smart remarks, flowing in a ceaseless whisper. The pain was intolerable. But she couldn't stop it. She didn't know how. Like the unfinished jigsaw left broken in her drawer, she couldn't piece the pieces together. A trail of grief and dignity ran in two orderly lines down her face. She knew those in the queue could hear her. But the more she thought, the louder she bawled, she didn't care. She wanted them to hear.

"Was this running away?" She asked herself. "No." she just couldn't stand the music from the stadium anymore, every note a pain, the bow scratching the strings, horrifyingly, and ear piercing screeches of forced passion leaking from the hollow emotionless instruments. As she waited for the bus, the concert was just beginning. She could hear the opening music surging through the thick theatre doors behind her. Inside, seated rows of prodigies, fulfilling their dreams warped by ambitious parents anticipated their moments on stage. Her parents were in there, looking for her surely, but she wanted none of that. She wanted to enjoy her music. Play from her heart. Let everything go. Let the music express her tears, her smile, her anger.

The serene symphonic sounds flowing in her ears translated as spine-chilling repulsive haziness of sound as the bus pulled to a hurtling stop in front of her. With a quick glance back, she bit her lip, swallowed her fears and stepped onto the waiting bus. The passengers looked up momentarily picking up on the scent of perfection. Her golden locks were whisked back, sprayed with dull precision and pinned flat on her head. Her ironed evening gown draped to the floor. Two vertical lines of mascara stained her face, ruining her faultless makeup. Uneasily, she attempted to divert the stares away from her. She felt like the little girl inside, clinging on tighter to the grey violin case; knuckles turning a pasty white.

She rocked back and forth, as the bus juggled her from one thought to another. If she tried hard enough, cared enough for a change, she could go out there, show them this was her

dream, her music; not her parents, nor the judges. This was her show and she was going to show them what real music sounded like; the true serenity and beauty of the chords melting the heart, the notes conjuring emotions from within. She was going to bless them with the gift of real music. It was their turn to cry. She wiped the black smudges off her face, tore out the pins holding her gorgeous tresses back and shook out her flaxen curls allowing them to tumble down freely, clinging to the arch of her neck.

As the bus continued to speed on, the scenery whirled into a dark green haze. The world outside seemed to be a frenzy too and for a moment, she felt less lonely. Everything seemed to have their dilemmas too. And as they rounded the corner, even the driver contemplated his options at the forked road.

As she swayed with the bumpy bus, her closed her eyes, vision swirling away. She could see a familiar emerald lawn and there in the glass shed, under the shade of the colourful patio, was the bench. A little violin image etched in the wood, carved with passion and desire. The timber was weathered smooth from her constant visits. She could feel the pulsating beat in the air, her fingers melted across the fingerboard, the trees danced and the birds hummed in harmony. She could hear the vibratos of the metal strings, the sweeping sound of the fine horsehair bow. She was lost in serenity, the music washed over her, her cascading fears slipped away from her in a hushed diminuendo. Magical fortes sealed the parched and empty channels of her being, beckoning to her crescendo of passion, the musical emotional tension escalating to delicate and ethereal notes. She experienced invincibility, supremacy, freedom.

“Focus, Susan! What are you doing! Your precious rehearsal time is being wasted. Susan!” the birds fluttered and disappeared in the safety of the thick foliage, cowering from her mother’s sharp shrieks, while the trees froze. But with her eyes closed, she was gone, melted in the sweet strums.

She felt the wind seep in through the agape window and kiss away her pain. Her waking eyes adjusted to the light, burning with a newfound intensity of hope and confidence. She felt reborn, capable of her actions for once in her life. No longer was she the little hopeless crying girl. If she could do it then, she could do it now.

Inhaling a breath of pristine air, she saw the birds singing and the trees jiving to a recognisable rhythm in the air.

“Wait! Stop the bus.”

Inspiration

I saw this portrait painting on Etsy and I was captured by the details. The painter



succeeds to portray how the girl is absorbed in playing the violin. There is a sense of elegance and beauty of the way she plays, inspiring me to capture this moment in my story. Furthermore, this portrait reminded me of my own experience with music. When I was younger, my parents forced me to play piano. At first I didn't enjoy it, but as I grew older I came to appreciate and

understand the true beauty and pleasure of playing piano. I wanted to express, through my experience with music, and through my story capturing the moment of the portrait, that it doesn't matter how good you are at a certain task, because enjoying the experience is all that counts.

My Grandpa's Home

By Sierra North Stokes HS

Light wind brings a chill
So cool, yet full of warmth
Your home feels like mine
No one here but your presence

I never knew you
Nor did your son
You left my dad at two years old
So unexpected, but your time to go

I hear stories of you and smile
No memories, but thoughts are enough
I know you're watching over us
You have been all our lives

A guardian angel
You are our protector
Showing us the way
Leading us on in our journeys

You are dearly missed
But we know you're here
I feel your presence
When I visit your old home



I feel your spirit around me
Keeping me safe from the harsh world
I know you're looking down on us
Thank you for watching over me

I wish you were here
So I could hug you just once
I never knew you Grandpa
But I love you more than anything

Explanation

I think about my grandfather often. He crosses my mind each time I pass by his old home. It is such a beautiful and peaceful place. This picture makes me think of him and the stories I've heard about him. He was special to so many people, and he made an impact on several lives. I know it hurts my father that he never knew his dad, and I wish he would've been able to have him around. I know that my dad thinks of him a lot and that he holds a special place in his heart. My father visits the grave sight of a man he never knew and places flowers there because he loves him dearly. Everyone can feel his presence in this place, so we know that he is here. I know my grandpa is watching over my entire family. He is helping and protecting us, and will continue to do so throughout our lives. He is close to our hearts and we all love and miss him very much. Even though he isn't here in body, he is present in spirit.

Other Global Competitions

- <https://www.youngwriters.co.uk/competitions/lets-get-writing.php>
- <http://theglobalwritingworkshop.wikispaces.com/>
- <http://www.globaleducationconference.com/page/2014-conference>
- <http://www.flatconnections.com/flat-projects.html>
- <http://www.globaleducationconference.com/profiles/blog/list?user=2f1rb14d1dfjc>
- <https://monsterproject.wikispaces.com/Welcome>
- <http://www.classroom20.com/>
- <http://www.100people.org/index.php#a>
- <http://www.peacecorps.gov/wws/>
- <http://www.globaleducation.edu.au/>
- <http://my-ecoach.com/online/webresourcelist.php?rlid=6499#4> – links to global project sites
- <http://www.globe.gov/>